BOOK NOTES

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RESTORATION REVIEW

GOD'S TENDER LOVING CARE

One morning recently before the children got away to school, I was reading to them from the *Reader's Digest* about the importance of childhood memories, an article that had more to say to parents than to children. The author told of one memory that had lingered lovingly in his mind since he was but a lad of ten. His mother was seriously ill. He had got up in the middle of the night to get a drink of water. As he passed his parents' bedroom, he saw the light on. He looked in and saw his father sitting in a chair in his bathrobe next to his Mother, doing nothing. Rushing into the room, he asked his father what was wrong. His father soothed him by saying, "Nothing's wrong. I'm just watching over her." Now a man with a family of his own, he says the memory of the light and warmth from that room that night has given him strength to bear his own burdens. And he has found those words, "I'm just watching over her," curiously powerful.

This story went well with a point that we had discussed from the Bible the night before. It was from 1 Pet. 4:19: "So then, those who suffer because this is God's will for them, should by their good deeds trust themselves completely to their Creator, who always keeps his promise." I had emphasized the point that God is to be completely trusted, for He always does what He says He will do. He promises tender loving care to those who trust Him. I pointed out to the children that I've never known anyone who was ever disappointed in trusting God, nor anyone who ever regretted serving Him. Men often forsake us or back down on their promises, but God never. And yet what is more needed in today's confused world than simple trusting faith in one who always keeps His Promises.

It is a tender scene, the man sitting beside his wife in her illness, watching out for her. It became a cherished memory to the child. Love like that is impressive, and it says more than volumes of words. We miss the point of religion when we fail to see that it too is a love story, the greatest love story of all, the story of God's tender loving care for each one of us. It is not necessary that we fancy God sitting in a chair beside our bed, watching out for

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us, but that kind of imagery gets close to the picture we have in the Bible of God's care for us.

To Israel God said through Moses: "I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself." Man in bondage is as helpless as the eaglet that has not yet the strength to fly. The power of the eagle, its wings spread wide bearing the eaglet in its flight, symbolizes the upholding strength of God for each of us. The Egypt to Canaan pilgrimage provides many instances of God's tender loving care. Deut. 8 tells us that in the wilderness wanderings, brought on as God's discipline of Israel, the people's clothing did not wear out during all those years and apparently grew with them, and their feet did not swell. Moreover they were fed with manna from heaven and they got water from the rock that followed them. And all along they had the promise of a land that flowed with milk and honey, a land from whose hills they could dig copper, a land of wheat and barley, a land in which they would lack nothing.

David was awed by God's tender loving care of Israel, a people who in their rebellion cried out, "Can God spread a table in the wilderness?" That is just what He did. As David puts it: "Man ate the bread of the angels; he sent them food in their abundance." Not only manna did He feed them but quail as well, causing David to say in *Psalms* 78: "He rained flesh upon them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas; he let them fall in the midst of the camp, all around their habitations."

The marvel of all this is that Israel still did not learn to believe in God, to trust in His promises. David puts the finger on it when he says: "They had no faith in God, and did not trust his saving power." Or as he says in *Psalms* 78:42: "They did not keep in mind his power, or the day when he redeemed them from the foe."

Do we really believe God? A vital question it is for us today, just as it was for Israel. How near are we to those in Jesus' home town, who in spite of his presence and his mighty works, would not believe in him. The *New English Bible* puts it: "He was taken aback by their want of faith." It was so different with Abraham, who "strong in faith, gave honour to God, in the firm conviction of his power to do what he had promised" (Rom. 5:21). This is what faith is all about: *an implicit trust that God will do as He has promised.*

We need to ponder His promises more, for they serve as a safeguard against all the evil forces that attack us. 2 Peters 1:4 puts it this way: "Through this might and splendour he has given us his promises, great beyond all price, and through them you may escape the corruption with which

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lust has infected the world, and come to share in the very being of God." What a statement that is! There can be no question but what lust has infected our generation as it has all history. The good news is that an appreciation of God's promises will deliver us from such peril, which is itself a promise. It teaches us that we are not only to be more knowledgeable of the promises, but that we are to cultivate belief in them, really trusting God in all that He says He will do. It is to believe that in Him there is tender loving care all the way.

Take that simple but beautiful promise of Matt. 10:39: "By gaining his life a man will lose it; by losing his life for my sake, he will gain it." Really believing that will make all the difference in a man's life. This is the life of trust that explains why Pastor Niemoeller was able to stand up against the Nazis and declare himself a free man in Christ in those cruel years of Hitler's reign. While other pastors cooperated with the Nazis, rationalizing that someone has to preserve the church, Niemoeller believed that in losing his life he would gain it, just as Jesus promised. He did not see that the church's purpose is to preserve itself, but to witness to the truth at whatever cost.

One gains by losing! God promises. One wonders how often the Lord has the chance to prove Himself on that score, man's lack of faith being what it is.

To Paul the tender loving care of God is so great that he insists that He is "able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or conceive," which means he believed as Jesus did when he said, "Set your mind on God's kingdom and his justice before everything else, and all the rest will come to you as well" (Matt. 6:33). Seek God's kingdom *first.* This means commitment to God, not a false trust in our own power. Moses urged Israel to remember in their prosperity that "It is God that gives you the power to gain wealth." Jesus seems to be saying that we need not worry about being taken care of, if we will but put God first.

In Luke the statement "Seek first the kingdom of God and the rest will come to you as well" is followed by "Have no fear, little flock, for your Father has chosen to give you the kingdom." It is a tender stroke, the Father choosing to give us the kingdom. But it is in some way related to our *seeking* it. God cannot give what is not willingly sought. And there is no promise of a life free of fear except as one seeks God's kingdom above all else. There is therefore an important relationship between what God promises and our trust that He will make it so in our lives.

God's promises are as many as they are marvelous, but there are those that are especially precious. The promise that He works everything together for our good (Rom. 8:28) thrills us all. Then there is the promise that He will not allow us to be tempted without giving us a way to escape (1 Cor. 10:13). And there is "the promised Holy Spirit," with all his attending blessings (Eph. 1:14). There is that "house not made with hands" which will be ours eternally in heaven, along with

the promise that even in this earthly house we are "day by day inwardly renewed" (2 Cor. 4:16). There is the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, the New Jerusalem, and the victory of Christ over Satan, a victory we all share. On and on it goes, all evidences of God's tender loving care.

But the most precious of all to me, I think, is the one that meant so much to Paul: *the assurance of Christ's love regardless of what happens.* There in Rom. 8:31-39 he observes that the gift of Christ's love is based upon the gift of Christ himself. "With this gift how can he fail to lavish upon us all he has to give?," he says. I like that word *lavish,* for it tells the story of God's love. And nothing can separate us from that love, nothing. Not hardship or affliction. Not persecution or peril. Not even spirits or superhuman powers. *Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!*

No wonder Peter would declare that such promises make us partners of the divine nature, thus giving us the motivation to overcome human nature. With such promises taken to heart it should be easy for us to preserve the Spirit's unity and stop the madness of our divisions. These promises should help us with our family problems, for what man who really believes in the gifts that God has lavished upon us in Jesus will be overbearing with his children and rude to his wife. With a view of "the things unseen" always before us, service to suffering humanity should be a joy. *—the Editor*

The Travel Letters of Alexander Campbell . . .

CAMPBELL'S EARLY JOURNEYS

Coming to America in 1809 as a young man barely 21, Alexander Campbell did not begin to travel extensively in the country until some twenty years afterward. These were the years he spent studying with his father Thomas, getting married, starting a seminary, formulating his view on restoration, preaching in the environs, and in 1823 starting the *Christian Baptist.* The circumstance, however, that catapulted him into prominence was his debate with John Walker in 1820 in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio and his subsequent discussion with W. C. McCalla in Washington, Kentucky in 1823. These debates were the occasion of his first extensive journeys away from his beloved Bethany, Virginia, and they aroused such widespread interest as to persuade him to publish first the *Christian Baptist* and later the *Millennial Harbinger,* which in turn became the contacts through which he became one of the most travelled men of his generation.

One of the mysteries of Campbell scholars is the disappearance from history of the many letters that he must have written to his first wife, Margaret, during these early trips away from home, one trip to Kentucky in 1824 lasting all of three months.

Margaret died in 1827, just after taking a long journey with her husband to Nashville, having been Alexander's wife for 16 years. While there was little occasion for correspondence with her during most of those years, there must have been numerous letters written to her during the three or four years prior to her death, at which time Alexander began his long absences from home.

One view is that Selina, his second wife, destroyed them. Another is that Campbell removed them to his office at Bethany College, where they were burned with the college in 1853. If I were to guess, I would say that Alexander deposited them with Dr. Richardson, his biographer, and they were finally lost when his home was destroyed by fire. Against this view is that Dr. Richardson makes so little use of such letters, using only one of them in his *Memoirs,* one that Alexander wrote to Margaret while away in Kentucky to debate McCalla. But it is the inclusion of this one letter that supports my view, for if the doctor had *one* of the letters he might well have had them all, and he used none of the others because he had no occasion to do so. In any event I cannot believe that Selina would have destroyed them, for she simply loved Margaret too much for that, and, having an eye for history as she had, becoming herself a biographer of Campbell, she would not have destroyed such obviously significant material.

However that may be, it is an unfortunate loss. How I would like to have those letters in writing this series! I could make this first installment more interesting and more revealing of Campbell's early thinking, that's for sure. In the one letter that Richardson passes along to us, though not in its entirety, Alexander says to Margaret: "I intend, if my health will permit, to visit Lexington and Cincinnati after the debate, and therefore you need not expect to see me for nearly six weeks from my departure from home. I will write in a few days again." He also tells his wife that there is great expectation and zeal in reference to the debate, but too much party spirit, and he hopes that through his efforts the cause of truth will be glorified.

If we had that letter that he said he would write to Margaret after a few more days, and others that no doubt followed, we might know more about his private judgements about the debate as well as about the exciting things that happened on his visit to Lexington (but not to Cincinnati), despite the illness he referred to, which was dyspepsia that had afflicted him since leaving home. During the McCalla debate and in his preaching engagements that followed, he was pale and exhausted and could not stand erect.

Campbell's performance in the Walker and McCalla debates, in which he defended immersion as the scriptural mode of baptism, made him a hero among the Baptists, who, because of their lack of an educated ministry, were badly in need of someone to stand up for them against the sophisticated Presbyterians. McCalla himself, a Presbyterian divine, recognized Campbell as the chief exponent of the Baptist position. In preparation for the debate he wrote to Alexander: "I am inclined

to meet you, not from any favorable opinion of your piety or sincerity, but because you are allowed (and I suppose justly) to be the greatest champion of baptism in America."

So profuse was the outpouring of admiration from the Baptists that Campbell felt that honesty compelled him to relieve them of any apprehension that he was championing their cause. "Brethern, I fear if you knew me better you would esteem and love me less," he said to the Baptist ministers at the McCalla debate in a private meeting with them. "Let me tell you that I have almost as much against you Baptists as I have against the Presbyterians. They err in one thing and you in another." Led by Elder Vardeman, who became important to restoration efforts in Kentucky, the Baptist preachers asked of Campbell a list of particulars of what he thought their errors to be. He replied that he was too weary with debating with McCalla to undertake so heavy a task, but agreed to share with them some of the articles he had just issued in the *Christian Baptist,* having a few numbers of the new journal along with him that had not yet reached Kentucky.

The articles had to do with Campbell's objection to the clergy system and "the call to the ministry," as well as sectarian attitudes in missionary efforts. Vardeman and the other Baptists decided they could tolerate these peculiarities in Campbell's thinking, and continued to view him as their chief spokesman and to circulate his writings far and wide. They began to change as Campbell began to stress the *design* of baptism as being "for the remission of sins," as well as the mode of baptism. A break with the Baptists finally came, with Campbell debating them in his publications as much as those who practiced sprinkling. But in later years he expressed regret that the Disciples and Baptists ever had to go their separate ways, having as much in common as they had.

Following the McCalla debate Campbell visited Lexington and addressed Dr. James Fishback's famous Baptist church, one of the most flourishing in all the West. To see Fishback himself would have been worth the trip, for he was a man of superior talents and imposing physique, having been both a lawyer and physician before his ordination to the Presbyterian clergy. One convinced that immersion was the true mode of baptism, he cast his lot with a small and despised Baptist group only to build it into a great congregation. There stood Alexander Campbell in his pulpit, still a young man and a stranger from the hills of Western Virginia. Basing his remarks upon Heb. 1 and rejecting the "textuary preaching" so common in that day, he spoke for two hours upon the divine glory of the Son of God, despite his illness, to an audience that sat in rapt attention.

In the audience sat a youth named Theodore S. Bell, who was to become a distinguished physician in Louisville. In later life after Campbell had long since become a famous man, Dr. Bell wrote:

"I never had heard anything that approached the power of that discourse, nor have I ever heard it equaled since. Under the training of my mother, one of the most thorough scholars in the Bible that I ever knew, and of Dr. Fishback, although I then made no pretensions to Christianity, I was almost as familiar with the Bible as with my alphabet. But that speech on Hebrews lifted me into a world of thought of which I had previously known nothing. It has been 45 years since I heard that pulpit discourse, but it is as vivid in my memory, I think, as when I first heard it."

It is difficult for us, amidst all our technology, to realize the hardships of the travelling man on the American frontier in the 1820's. To meet his appointment for the debate with Mr. McCalla, 300 miles from Bethany, Alexander rode horseback for ten long days. He could have gone by steamboat part of the way, but the Ohio was then too low for navigation. One can fly these days from Dallas to Houston, a similar distance, in 45 minutes! Wouldn't such a possibility have fascinated the mind of Campbell, who became an authority on travel in a growing nation through some 40 years of experience?

On that journey by horseback through the wilderness of Ohio and Kentucky he was accompanied, interestingly enough, by Sidney Rigdon, who was then a Baptist pastor in Pittsburg, but who was later to become one of the founding fathers of Mormonism. At the discussion Rigdon took copious notes that Campbell later used in publishing the McCalla debate, revealing a talent that he later used in revamping a fanciful novel by one Mr. Spaulding into the Book of Mormon, or so it is claimed. In any event Mr. Rigdon was a man for novelty, having both the holy kiss and footwashing in his Pittsburg church. Campbell was later compelled to expose the Book of Mormon as a hoax and to reject Sidney Rigdon. But no doubt he often thought of that long horseback journey with Rigdon as he witenssed the growth of Mormonism and its move across the West to build a magic city in Utah. By then, however, Rigdon was out of it, having competed with Brigham Young for leadership and lost.

The following year, 1824, Campbell made a short journey over into Ohio as a representative of the Wellsburg, Virginia congregation to the Mahoning Association of Churches, and later in the year a 90-day tour into Kentucky where he met both Barton W. Stone and Raccoon John Smith.

There is an interesting story behind Alexander being appointed messenger of the Wellsburg church, a few miles distant from his home in Bethany. The first church of the Campbell wing of the movement was at Brush Run, near Washington, Pennsylvania, which grew out of the Christian Association, the group organized by Thomas Campbell that had no intention of becoming a church and wanted only to be a force for unity in the established churches. After the Campbells were rejected by the Presbyterians, the Brush Run congregation, where Alexander was a member joined the Redstone Association, a confederation of Baptist churches.

These were days when Campbell

was not faring too well with Baptist ministers, who had decided to exclude him from the next meeting of the association. Learning that the clergy of the Redstone group were ganging up on him, Alexander quietly asked permission of the Brush Run group to take some 30 of their members and start a new congregation at Wellsburg, which was somewhat nearer their homes. This made Alexander a member of Wellsburg, so when the Redstone people met, he was present merely as a spectator, while others, including Thomas Campbell, were delegates from Brush Run. When the time came to refuse Alexander a seat in the association, they were stymied when they learned he was no longer a member at Brush Run, but of a church that had membership in another association.

"Never," said Alexander afterwards, "did hunters, on seeing the game unexpectedly escape from their toils at the moment when its capture was sure, glare upon each other a more mortifying disappointment than that indicated by my pursurers at that instant, on hearing that I was out of their bailiwick, and consequently out of their jurisdiction."

It is interesting that the Mahoning group "At the request of the Church of Christ at Wellsburg received it into the Association," which may be the earliest use of that name in our history. When the Brush Run congregation disbanded and moved to Bethany in about 1827, they erected a brick building which still stands, bearing the name *Church of Christ,* chiseled in stone above the door. Barton Stone, down in Kentucky, was also using this name, gladly calling himself an "elder in the Church of Christ." In time however this name, only sparingly used in the growing movement, gave way to Disciples of Christ, the term preferred by Alexander.

The trip to Kentucky was an effort to bring Baptist churches into the movement for reform. He felt close enough to them to believe that they might rally to a call for change that would effect the whole Christian world. In a letter to a correspondent in Missouri he writes: "I intend to continue in connection with this people so long as they will permit me to say what I believe and to censure what is amiss." He added: "I have no idea of adding to the catalogue of new sects. I labor to see sectarianism abolished and all Christians of every name united upon the one foundation upon which the apostolic Church was founded. To bring Baptists and Pedobaptists to this is my supreme end."

It was with this spirit that he visited the Kentucky Baptists, among whom he found several with likeminded views of reform, mainly Barton W. Stone, whom he met at Georgetown. Others who became prominent figures in our history that he met on this journey were Jacob Creath, Sr., James Challen, and Raccoon John Smith.

In his *Biography* Stone says he heard Campbell several times during his sojourns into Kentucky, in both public and private meetings. "I saw no distinctive feature between the doctrine he preached and that which we had

preached many years, except on baptism for remission of sins," he wrote. Campbell was not explicit enough in reference to the influence of the Spirit, Stone said, but added that later in life Campbell became more explicit. Had he done this earlier many honest souls would still be with us, Stone went on to say.

As for Campbell's character Stone wrote: "I will not say there are no faults in brother Campbell; but that there are fewer, perhaps, in him, than any man I know on earth; and over these few my love would throw a veil, and hide them from view forever. I am constrained, and willingly constrained, to acknowledge him as the greatest promoter of this reformation of any man living. The Lord reward him!"

This gracious tribute to Campbell tells us more about Stone than it does about Campbell. One does not associate with leaders in the church for long without realizing that this willingness to step back and give the other fellow the credit is rare indeed. Stone was 15 years older than Campbell, and he was busy in reformatory efforts while Campbell was still but a lad back in Ireland. Besides, the youthfull reformer from Virginia was invading his territory. But Stone was not a small person given to jealously and envy. He rather fell in love with Campbell and thanked God for his labors. That is the stuff that true reformations are made of.

And Alexander reciprocated with like trust and friendship. Despite the disagreements they were never able to resolve, some of them perhaps serious, they loved each other as brothers in the Lord. Campbell once wrote to Stone following a serious dispute on the nature of the preexistent Christ: "I will call you brother because you once told me that you could conscientiously and devoutly pray to the Lord Jesus Christ as though there was no other God in the universe than he." The Stone-Campbell controversy is a testimonial to us all of how men can differ and still be brothers together in the Lord, loving each other fervently.

Some two years before Campbell's first trip into Kentucky, Raccoon John Smith was addressing his Baptist congregation. He suddenly stopped and cried out to the surprised audience, "Something is wrong among us, but how to get it right I know not." It seems to have taken an Alexander Campbell to get Raccoon and his Baptist friends moving in the right direction. Once copies of the *Christian Baptist* fell into his hands, Raccoon was more than eager to lay his eyes on the reformer from Virginia, around whom there was now a whirlwind of controversy.

When Alexander came into Raccoon's part of Kentucky, the pious backwoods preacher hurried to meet him. So eager was he to study the man who had implanted so many new thoughts into his mind that he wanted to sit down and scan him for an hour, without anyone saying a word. But he only had time to meet the man before it was time to hear him speak. Campbell spoke that evening on the

allegory of Sarah and Hagar in Gal. 4. Raccoon kept listening for some clue that would reveal what sect Campbell belonged to, but there was none. "He seemed to move in a higher sphere than that in which these isms abounded," he said.

Once the service had ended Raccoon complained to a friend, "Is it not a little hard to ride thirty miles to hear a man preach thirty minutes?" The friend suggested that he look at his watch, which revealed that Campbell had spoken for two and a half hours! To which Raccoon responded, "Two hours of my time are gone and I know not how, though wide awake. When asked by a friend as to whether he discovered Campbell's *ism,* Raccoon replied: "No, I know nothing about him, but, be he devil or saint, he has thrown more light on that epistle and the whole Scriptures than I have heard in all the sermons I ever listened to before."

Able to be with Alexander privately for awhile, Raccoon asked him to tell him his religious experience, a subject that much engrossed his thinking at the time. Campbell related an experience that more than satisfied Raccoon, who insisted it would be accepted by any Baptist church in the land, though no details were given. One wonders what Campbell said in relating his *experience* to a Calvinistic Baptist.

Such are some of the highlights of Campbell's early travels, which are but a prelude to the great drama that was to unfold in his life at home and abroad. – *the Editor*

Next installment: *Campbell takes his dying wife to Nashville.*

IS IT THE CHURCH WE ARE TO RESTORE?

Some of our Church of Christ folk in Dallas who conduct Christian Tracts have published a tract entitled *Restoring the New Testament Church,* written by Paul McClung. It does a good job in setting forth what it refers to as "the peculiar plea of the church of Christ," which it describes as "a complete restoration of the church which was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ in the city of Jerusalem."

As a rule one can be suspect of any doctrine or practice that is *unique* to any religious society. It is those peculiar notions that set people apart as a sect, especially when they have allowed that peculiarity to become the criterion by which all others are judged. If only one group believes in the revelations of Ellen G. White or Joseph Smith, or only one group practices extreme unction, or wears such a unique name as Methodist or Baptist (or Church of Christ?), it strongly suggests a sectarian attitude somewhere along the line. Those things that are clearly set forth in holy writ are never characteristic of only one group.

I am willing, however, to save brother McClung from this categorization, for it so happens that the concept of

restoration is not peculiar to our people, for there were numerous restoration movements long before the like of Campbell and Stone, in whose time brother McClung sees the "Church of Christ Restored." There is, though, a peculiar emphasis that many of our leaders give to the restoration plea, including Paul McClung in this tract, that is highly questionable, and that contributes more to sectism than to the unity of believers. This is the notion that our task is to restore the church itself, which of course implies that it has gone out of existence.

This is not merely a matter of semantics, for there is a basic difference in looking at both the church and restoration. The church is viewed as a "something" having doctrines, forms, institutions, and practices that, once correctly *restored,* really does exist once more. This view sees the church as pure and right in apostolic times, but then falling away because of various innovations, only to be "restored" in the Restoration Movement led by Alexander Campbell. This means that God's church did not exist upon earth for centuries, buried as it was in the morass of apostasy, only to be resurrected by the clarion call of our pioneers. This view equates the Restoration Movement with the Church of Christ, and there is the strong implication that since the church has been restored the Restoration Movement is no longer needed, having fulfilled its mission in giving us what we now call the Church of Christ. There is, therefore, no need in bringing individuals or congregations into a so-called Restoration Movement. We simply point them to the Church of Christ as "the restored New Testament church."

No one would object to such a view of restoration more than the pioneers themselves. They did not suppose that God's church did not exist and that it was therefore their mission to restore it. They realized that the congregation of Christ has existed all through the ages, that, as Jesus said, the gates of hades would not prevail against it. The church surely had its inadequacies and impurities (but hasn't it always?), and it was terribly divided and sectarian. These things our pioneers sought to correct. This is why they chose to call themselves *reformers.* To reform the church is to make better that which already exists. To restore the church is to bring back into existence that which once was but for some reason disappeared. So if we use the term *restore* in reference to our task, then we should speak of restoring *to* the church the things that are wanting. Campbell, therefore, sought to restore unity *to* the church, along with other things, so as to make it what God wants it to be. Such is our task. Restoration is the means of reformation, and it is a task that never ends.

The notion that our pioneers in one great leap carried us all the way back to Jerusalem is a damaging fallacy. Dr. Richardson, in his *Memoirs* of Campbell, explains that the sage of Bethany saw his mission as that of continuing the reformation begun by Luther. Campbell realized that it was indeed the body of Christ that concerned Luther, that it certainly existed

in his time, and that he was seeking to free it from priestcraft and superstition. Any notion of restoration that ignores all such history and assumes that the church was non-existent all those centuries is both unreasonable and unscriptural. That we and our forbears have been brought on eagles' wings to the pristine beauty of New Testament Christianity and that this is amply evident in our own Church of Christ is a claim both extravagant and arrogant.

This kind of thinking runs a recognizable pattern. Not only did we bring the true church back into existence in the days of Campbell, but we make a big deal about it not being a denomination, just as the apostolic church was not a denomination. In view of what *denomination* means this is merely saying that the New Testament church had no name, that is, it was not designated in a way as to distinguish it from others. But the tract under consideration insists on the name Church of Christ. It is "the Church of Christ restored," as brother McClung puts it, and this is the designation he cites when he asks, "What name did the early church wear?" Well, if Church of Christ was the name of the primitive church, then it was a denomination.

But this is the way the game goes that we play. This tract refers to the discipline, organization, and worship of the early church, as well as the name, and the point is that *we* in the Church of Christ have faithfully restored all these features of primitive Christianity. It is agreed that the early church's singing was "a cappella," while in fact it would be difficult to prove congregational singing of any kind. And 2 John 9 is quoted as a warning in this regard. Says brother McClung: "If we should use a mechanical instrument we would be going on and abiding not in the doctrine of Christ."

Lifting a verse from its context like this, making it refer to something the writer never intended so as to uphold one's own opinion, is grossly sectarian, And when we use the silence of the scriptures, as in the case of instrumental music, to argue for our own uniqueness in being like the New Testament church, even to the point of excluding all those who do not agree with us, we are a hindrance rather than a help to the cause of peace and unity.

Let us, like our pioneers before us, acknowledge that all the powers of Satan cannot destroy the congregation of Christ on earth. Wherever there is a disciple of Jesus there is the body of Christ. Since the time our Lord said "Upon this rock I will build my church" there has not been one day without there being some members of that church somewhere. There have been digressions and innovations, to be sure. The church has been and may even now be threatened with decadence. But still it is the church. Even the church at Sardis, described as dead by the Lord himself, was urged to "Awake and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death." It is true that Jesus threatens to remove the candlestick from some congregations, such as the one at Ephesus (Rev. 2:5), but it is best that we leave

that judgment in his hand.

The Restoration Movement must be an effort *within the church* to reform its faith and practice and to restore the things that are wanting. The Church of Christ, whether denomination or not, should carry on a labor of love in making the church at large what God wants it to be. We lose nothing in acknowledging that there are Christians besides ourselves and that the church of God on earth embraces more than our own number. There will be glory enough if we allow ourselves to be used for the peace and unity of his church, and to contribute something to "preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," at least in our own ranks. – *the Editor*

THE CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE
By F. R. W. Kimberley

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:11-12: "Where unto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know who I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

This is the full Christian assurance. Do YOU subscribe to this life policy?

One verse covers this life and the life beyond and no other written document offers or promises so much.

I know – a PERSONAL knowledge.

Whom – A PERSONAL Saviour.

I have believed – a PERSONAL faith.

I am persuaded – a PERSONAL conviction.

I have committed – a PERSONAL committment.

Against that day – a PERSONAL hope.

I know. We do not have perfect knowledge, but only know *in part,* and as we grow older we realize how little we know; in every sphere and particularly in Christian experience. Although perfect knowledge is denied us in this life, we are exhorted to grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. Jesus prayed for His people, 'That they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou didst send.' THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL.

To know God personally. Can we bring the realization of the existance of God into our everyday life? Is God real to you and me? Is He watching over us, caring for us, protecting us and teaching us by His Word that the best is yet to be? Paul taught us to say with him, "I am not ashamed because I KNOW."

Whom. "I know WHOM." – a PERSON – a personal Saviour – HUMAN and DIVINE. Paul's knowledge was of Jesus and this verse applies to Him. WHOM? He who was 'made flesh and dwelt among us.' That wonderful earthly life which captured

the hearts of men and women, making them His followers and friends even before they understood His teaching. Paul said, 'I know WHOM'. What do WE know of Him? He lived and worked in Nazareth for thirty years and His short ministry was filled with human service. Can we in our limited way be like Him – giving something to a needy world – being a little kinder? No one can be too kind – love is of God.

I have believed. Paul put knowledge first because faith needs at least elementary knowledge. A knowledge of Jesus leads to belief or rejection. To believe is to have faith – a PERSONAL FAITH. It leads to trust and Christian experience, for whilst it brings added responsibilities, it gives a divine attribute to human life and a belief in God's purpose for the world and the individuals. Jesus should be the centre of our faith and love.

I am persuaded. After a life of service Paul passed on to us not only an assurance of knowledge and faith, but also a conviction and confidence in the power of Jesus. He wrote to the Philippians: "Being confident of this very thing that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ." 1 John 5:14 reads: "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us." This note of conviction is a marked step in Christian experience but must not be regarded as the terminus. In Paul's day the more noble were those who searched the Scriptures daily. Should we do less?

He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him. A personal commitment, meaning here the act of entrusting. David spoke of personal commitment, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." Paul gave up his hope of a family life and suffered privation and persecution in exchange for trust and certainty that his commitment to Jesus would be kept through life and for eternity. He says in 2 Tim. 4:18: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve ME unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever." How much of our lives have been committed to Christ? Can we reasonably expect Him to know us when He has so small a part of our lives? We may fail Him, but He will never fail us. First we must commit – then He will keep.

Against that day. A personal hope. The second advent has always been the hope of true believers. The Saviour's parting promise, that He would come again, sustained His disciples even through times of persecution. In my generation this teaching has been neglected, only to be revived during wars and periods of unrest. We should look again at the words of Habakkuk 2:14: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Then there is Acts 1:11: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven."

F. R. W. Kimberley, longtime teacher and preacher in the Church of Christ in England and Canada, made his living as a sheet metal worker. Now 80, he is paralyzed as a result of a stroke in 1970 and is hospitalized. His daughter has permitted us to publish the above from his pen, written years ago and reflective of his life of faith. He may be written at 1334 Cawthra Rd., Misssissauga, Ontario, Canada.

SOBER TESTIMONY

I have just finished reading your article *An Open Letter to a Rejected Minister.* I can identify with the young minister, having just gone through a similar experience, resulting in the loss of my job and disfellowship from the church for my whole family.

Recently my wife was healed from an illness that had plagued her for over two years, including several weeks of hospitalization. Her healing resulted from the prayers of those who believe God heals today as he did in New Testament times. Numerous doctors and specialists were unable to help her. When it was again recommended that she go to the hospital, we decided to take the matter to the Lord, the Great Physician. The results were immediate. She is now totally healed.

This was foreign to both of us, for we had been brought up to believe that the day of miraculous healing is past. Yet it was through Church of Christ friends, who had similar experiences in prayer, that we turned to the Lord in desperation, asking for their prayers. My wife Carla and I had long felt that something was missing in our relationship to God, even though she taught in the Christian school and I was working for one of our church supported children's homes. That closeness with the Lord was not there. Something was missing. So we began attending studies with those who had been filled with the Holy Spirit, the Lord giving me a hunger that I had never had before. We met with numerous groups, in and out of the Church of Christ, including the Full Gospel Men's Fellowship.

My elders, who are also my employers in the children's home, told me that I must not visit any more with "unbelievers." I was bluntly told to "shape up or ship out." I had reached the point where I could no longer deny what I was beginning to see as the truth. What I saw in the lives of others was real. So my wife and I felt that we would have to continue to seek the Lord's truth and will in our lives. Three more meetings were held with the elders, and finally on Nov. 18 I was fired from my job at the home and we were withdrawn from. A letter of withdrawal was sent to all the local congregations, and it was published in the children's home newsletter which is mailed to 35,000 families.

Praise the Lord for the opportunity to witness to so many that we believe the Holy Spirit is alive and operates in the lives of Christians today as he did during the days of the apostles. The Lord has blessed us with his Holy Spirit, including the manifestation of tongues. – *Donald B. Meyers, 5113 Berget, Amarillo 79106*

If a rich man is proud of his wealth, he should not be praised until it is known how he employs it. –*Socrates*